

**Senate Special Committee on Aging**  
**“The Image of Aging in Media and Marketing”**  
**Opening Statement of Chairman Breaux**

Good morning and thank you for attending today’s hearing on the image of aging in media and marketing. I would like to first thank our witnesses who have traveled a long way to speak to us this morning, especially Ms. Doris Roberts. Ms. Roberts, who won an Emmy last year, has been nominated for her second Emmy Award this year for her comedic performances in the television series, “Everybody Loves Raymond.” Congratulations Ms. Roberts! I also want to thank Sen. Craig for joining us to discuss the important issue of ageism in the media.

We have all sat through films in which a 60 something leading man is paired with a 20 something leading lady. We have also seen older people mocked and younger people celebrated for the purpose of selling a product. It is clear that the entertainment, marketing and news industries value youth. What this hearing will address today is the fact that, often, the media’s obsession with youth comes at the expense of older Americans. In fact, seventy-five percent of older consumers are dissatisfied with marketing efforts directed at them and often avoid buying products whose ads are negative and stereotypical. In the quest to target youth, the media and marketing industries ignore the purchasing power and preferences of millions of baby boomers and seniors across the country—a population that controls 3/4 of the nation’s wealth.

Many of the problems older Americans face today are rooted in the fact that our society simply does not value older people as it should. As our witnesses will discuss, negative images of aging in print, on television and on the big screen affect how older Americans prepare for retirement, spend money, maintain physical health and interact with family and friends.

Just as it is wrong to stereotype and discriminate against people because of their race, religion or gender, so too is it wrong to stereotype and discriminate against people simply because they are old. Only through raising awareness of the problem of ageism in the media can we begin to address the greater societal implications of an aging population.

Now is the time to embrace aging and recognize the ways in which Americans of all ages are redefining aging and working to eliminate ageism. I look forward to hearing from all of our witnesses.